



BLAENAVON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL FINANCE MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14th of MAY 2025 AT 6.30 PM.

Pursuant to the requirements of Section 47 of the Local Government and Elections Wales) Act 2021, the meeting was held on a hybrid basis in the Council Chamber at 101, High Street Blaenavon and remotely.

In attendance:

Councillors in attendance: A. Lewis, (In the Chair), N. Matthews, J. Hunt, J. Davies, L. Cowles, A. Beavan, I. Parfitt, M. Wheeler.

Officers: Kevin Warren (Chief Officer), Kerry Jones (Assistant Chief Officer), Sophie Johnson (CWD Officer).

Visitors: Ashleigh Taylor (Chairperson of the World Heritage Group).

Members of public: None present

The finance meeting was opened at 6:30pm by the Deputy Mayor Councillor Lewis who welcomed everyone and expressed thanks for attendance.

Cllr Lewis expressed her gratitude to members for the trust and confidence they had shown in appointing her as Deputy Mayor.

1. To receive any questions from the public.

None received.

2. To receive and accept apologies.

The Chief Officer informed the chairperson that the following apologies had been received.

- Cllr Porter.
- Cllr Evans.
- Cllr Griffin, no formal apology received, attending conference.

It was proposed by Cllr Wheeler and seconded by Cllr Beavan that the apologies be accepted.

All members in agreement.

Resolved - Apologies accepted.

3. Declarations of Interest.

None declared.

4. To receive an update from Ashleigh Taylor (Chairperson of the World Heritage Group) relating to World Heritage Day 2025.

Ashleigh provided an overview of the event planning progress to date and confirmed that preparations are well underway and on schedule.

All funding has now been successfully received into the World Heritage Day bank account.

This year's event will follow a similar format to previous years, featuring a fun fair, community stalls, and activities hosted by the Workmen's Hall, Big Pit, and the Heritage Centre.

The annual parade will take place as usual, with VIP guests, including the mayor, who will receive their invitations next week.

Ashleigh expressed her thanks to the Town Council for its continued support, particularly the funding contribution, which will cover the costs of required road closures. An invoice for £2,457.43 will be sent directly from TCBC for payment.

Both local schools are participating and are creating banners to mark the 25th anniversary of World Heritage Site status.

While the event marketing and programme are still being finalised, letters will be sent to local businesses with reminders about waste management and recycling responsibilities.

Additionally, residents will be informed in advance of the day's impact, particularly around access. It was noted that stall placements will ensure that disabled access remains unobstructed.

Members questions:

- Members welcomed the progress being made on environmental and accessibility issues but suggested that consideration also be given to the placement of dropped kerbs to further improve access.
- A question was raised regarding the fundraising efforts undertaken by the group over the past eleven months.

In response, Ashleigh thanked members for their comments and provided an update on fundraising. She explained that funds had been raised during the Lantern Parade and from stalls at last year's event.

However, most funding was secured through sponsorship from key partners, including £10,000 from Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC) and £5,000 from Blaenavon Town

Council. In addition, a contribution was made through the personal donation scheme by Cllr Cowles.

Ashleigh provided an update on the 25th Anniversary Project in her capacity as Chair of the World Heritage Site Learning and Engagement Group.

The Blaenavon World Heritage Site Partnership has endorsed a Heritage Lottery Fund application totalling £250,000 to mark the 25th anniversary.

This bid has been developed over the past nine months, with support from more than 17 organisations, all of which have committed to helping deliver and participate in the project.

The concept was shaped through collaboration with partners and community consultation via a public survey. The project is centred around four core objectives:

- Learning
- Community engagement
- Heritage volunteering
- Landscapes

The initiative comprises approximately 25 individual activities. Ashleigh noted that she had consulted with several members during the development process.

The funding application is expected to be submitted in June. Ashleigh offered to circulate further details to members upon request.

The application will be formally submitted by The Hwb Torfaen, acting as the charitable body. Delivery will be led by a community steering group made up of members from the Blaenavon Learning and Engagement Network, the Partnership Steering Group, and any other interested community groups.

The project is already well developed, with letters of support and offers of match funding received from seven organisations, though some are currently verbal rather than confirmed in writing.

These include the World Heritage Day Team, TCBC, CADW, Torfaen Talks. Blaenavon Museum, the Workmen's Hall, BWHIG, and The Hwb have pledged support through volunteer hours.

Ashleigh expressed hope that Blaenavon Town Council would formally endorse the project as a partner and consider contributing £2,500. She specifically encouraged the Council to support and help facilitate community events as part of the 25th anniversary celebrations.

Members' Questions and Discussion:

- Members requested that Ashleigh re-send the previously circulated project information for reference.

- It was suggested that funding may be available through the Brecon Beacons National Park Sustainable Development Fund. Members also noted the recent opening of a Brecon Beacons National Park sustainable tourism shop on Broad Street, which may offer additional support or partnership opportunities.

Ashleigh responded by confirming that she is already in discussions with both the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and the Canal Trust. She also expressed her intention to present the project to Blaenavon Wheelers and the Torfaen Access Forum in the near future.

The Chief Officer asked whether a formal letter of support from the Town Council would be required. If so, a written request would need to be submitted in advance and listed as an agenda item for the May Full Council meeting in order to be ratified.

Ashleigh confirmed the date of the May Full Council meeting (28TH May) and agreed to send a formal request along with an updated version of the project details ahead of that meeting.

Ashleigh Taylor then left the meeting.

Resolved: Members noted the updates.

5. Council Meetings: To confirm the minutes of the Council Finance Meeting held on the 9th of April 2025.

Minutes were read for accuracy with no amendments.

It was proposed by Cllr Beavan and seconded by Cllr Cowles that the minutes be accepted.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Minutes approved as a true and accurate record.

6. Responsible Finance Officer's Update: To receive and consider the April 2025 financial updates.

Mr Warren (Responsible Finance Officer) forwarded to members the April 2025 financial reports electronically in advance of the meeting which detailed the following areas:

- Income and Expenditure
- Credit Card Payments
- Cheque Payments
- Bacs Payments
- Cash Book Transactions
- Bank Reconciliation
- Project Expenditure
- Budget
- VAT
- Bank Statements (180)
- Petty Cash

Members were invited to ask any questions in relation to the information provided.

Members noted that the VE Day photography had been recorded twice in the finance system. The RFO clarified that this was due to an error and explained that one of the entries was related to photography for the Ambassador's visit.

Members were happy with the presentation.

It was proposed by Cllr Beavan and seconded by Cllr Wheeler that the financial report for April 2025 be accepted.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Financial update for April 2025 accepted by members.

7. To receive an update and make any relevant determinations regarding the Town Council's VE Day events taking place on the 3rd and 8th of May 2025.

Feedback for both VE Day 80 events was overwhelmingly positive, with excellent attendance at each.

The Church Service, in particular, received high praise from the community, including Father Walters, the Deputy Lord Lieutenant, and Lord Murphy. All commended the organisation and the quality of the performances on the evening.

The school poetry competition was once again well received, with outstanding submissions from pupils.

Both events were delivered under budget. In addition, the church and care home each raised funds during the events.

Cllr Davies added that the residents, their family members, and staff of the care home thoroughly enjoyed the event and thanked the Town Council for partnership working with Arthur Jenkins Care Home and providing the residents and wider community with an excellent VE DAY 80 event.

Resolved: Members noted the update

8. To receive an update and make any relevant determinations regarding the Town Council's Civic Visit that took place on the 9th of May 2025.

The day was a great success, reflecting meticulous planning and smooth delivery. It showcased strong partnership working across the World Heritage Site, including the contribution of volunteers, and left a highly positive impression of Blaenavon.

Visits to the key sites, namely the Heritage Centre, Ironworks, Big Pit, and the Heritage Railway were well received. The Ambassador expressed her appreciation for the experience, with incredibly positive feedback shared on the day.

It is hoped that this event will mark the beginning of a closer relationship between Blaenavon, Slovenia, and the town of Hrastnik.

The event was delivered under budget, further demonstrating the value and cost-effectiveness of partnership working.

Members commended the exceptional delivery of the day and noted how warmly the Ambassador, and her guests were received. Special praise was given to all volunteers and partner organisations for their efforts in making the day such a memorable success.

It was proposed by Cllr Beavan and seconded by Cllr Parfitt that formal letters of appreciation be sent to all partners who supported the Ambassador's visit to Blaenavon.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Formal letters of appreciation will be sent to all partner organisations involved in supporting the Ambassador's visit to Blaenavon.

9. To receive, discuss and make any relevant determinations relating to the internal audit report 2024/25 received from Community Finance Solutions dated the 25th of April 2025.

The Chief Officer forwarded to members a copy of the internal audit reports dated April 2025 and December 2024 and associated documents prior to the meeting.

There are no areas for concern noted by the internal auditor.

Resolved: Internal Audit Reports for 2024/25 noted and accepted by members.

10. To receive, discuss and note the content of the Town Council's Annual Return and Governance Statement for the Financial Year 2024/25.

The Chief Officer forwarded to members the Annual Return and audit requirements in advance of the meeting together with the annual governance statement which was displayed on screen.

An overview was provided to members by the Chief Officer relating to the Town Council's financial governance for 2024/25, highlighting the differences from last year.

The Chief Officer urged members to read the annual governance statement. This will be scrutinised and ratified at the May 2025 Full Council Meeting.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

11. To discuss and make any relevant determinations regarding the payment of Cllr Allowances for the 2025/26 fiscal year aligned to the recommendations made within the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales's Annual Report 2025.

A brief discussion took place amongst members with regards to the payment for Councillors allowances.

It was proposed by Cllr Beavan and seconded by Cllr Wheeler to transact Cllr allowances on 2nd June 2025.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Authorisation of Cllr allowances and date namely the 2nd of June 2025 accepted by members.

A further discussion took place amongst members for consideration of a special responsibility payment to the Chairperson of the Personnel and Establishment Committee.

Cllr Beavan proposed not to authorise the chair of the Personnel and Establishment Committee a responsibility payment. This was seconded by Cllr Parfitt.

Cllr Cowles abstained from voting. All other members in agreement.

Resolved: Special Responsibility Payment to the Chairperson of the Personnel and Establishment Committee not supported.

12. To receive, discuss and make any relevant determinations regarding the Cllr allowance opt out arrangements for 2025/26.

The opt out form had been forwarded to all members prior to the meeting. If members do not wish to receive the Cllr allowance they must complete, sign, and return the form to the Chief Officer.

Resolved – Members noted the update.

13. To discuss and make any relevant determinations relating to the Town Council's litter picking arrangements for May 2025.

The Assistant Chief Officer provided members with previous locations of litter picking sessions.

It was proposed by Cllr Beavan and seconded by Cllr Matthews that the May 2025 litter pick will take place at the Riverside and Curwood areas at the original meeting time of 10am.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: May 2025 litter pick location agreed as Riverside and Curwood areas.

14. To discuss and make a determination relating to a partnership project relating to VJ Day 2025.

Cllr Lewis informed members referencing an email received from Rob Butler, Managing Director of Historical Promotion and Events, regarding the possibility of a collaborative VJ Day event with the Heritage Centre in August 2025.

The Chief Officer added that initial discussions have taken place with Tyrone Trace from the Heritage Centre, with the proposed event scheduled for 15th August 2025. The proposal

includes partnering with Historical Promotion and Events, who would provide wartime demonstrations and period walkabout characters.

The projected cost is £1,000, to be shared between the Heritage Centre and the Town Council. This would result in an estimated contribution of £500 from the Town Council.

Members were asked to consider this potential cost, along with the likelihood of additional expenses if further artists or attractions are invited to take part.

It was suggested that some of the expense could be offset using profits from recent events namely £300 from the fashion show and £100 from the VE Day 80 event at Arthur Jenkins Care Home.

During the discussion, members raised concerns about holding the event on a Friday which could limit attendance from working members of the community. It was suggested that Saturday the 16th of August may be a more suitable alternative.

Cllr Lewis agreed to explore this option further with Tyrone Trace.

Additional ideas included holding a commemorative service at the cenotaph, similar to the VE Day and involving local schools and the Community Museum to broaden engagement and participation.

Cllr Parfitt proposed the organisation of a VJ Day event in partnership with the Heritage Centre, potentially to be held on Saturday the 16th of August 2025, with a commemorative service at the Cenotaph on Friday the 15th of August 2025.

This was seconded by Cllr Cowles.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: VJ Day event to be organised and service at the Cenotaph.

A further discussion took place amongst members to set up a working group. It was proposed by Cllr Hunt and seconded by Cllr Beavan to select a working group.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Working group to be established.

Discussions took place for members to form a working group. Cllrs Lewis, Beavan, and Hunt agreed to be working group members.

This was proposed by Cllr Cowles and seconded by Cllr Parfitt.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Working group established, namely Cllrs Lewis, Beavan and Hunt.

Finally, a discussion took place amongst members to set the budget for the VJ Day event.

Cllr Cowles proposed a maximum budget of £2000 this was seconded by Cllr Hunt.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Budget of £2000 maximum set for the VJ Day event.

15. To discuss and make a determination regarding potential Town Council projects for allocation into the Project Action Plan 2024/25. Relevant updates or new projects as notified.

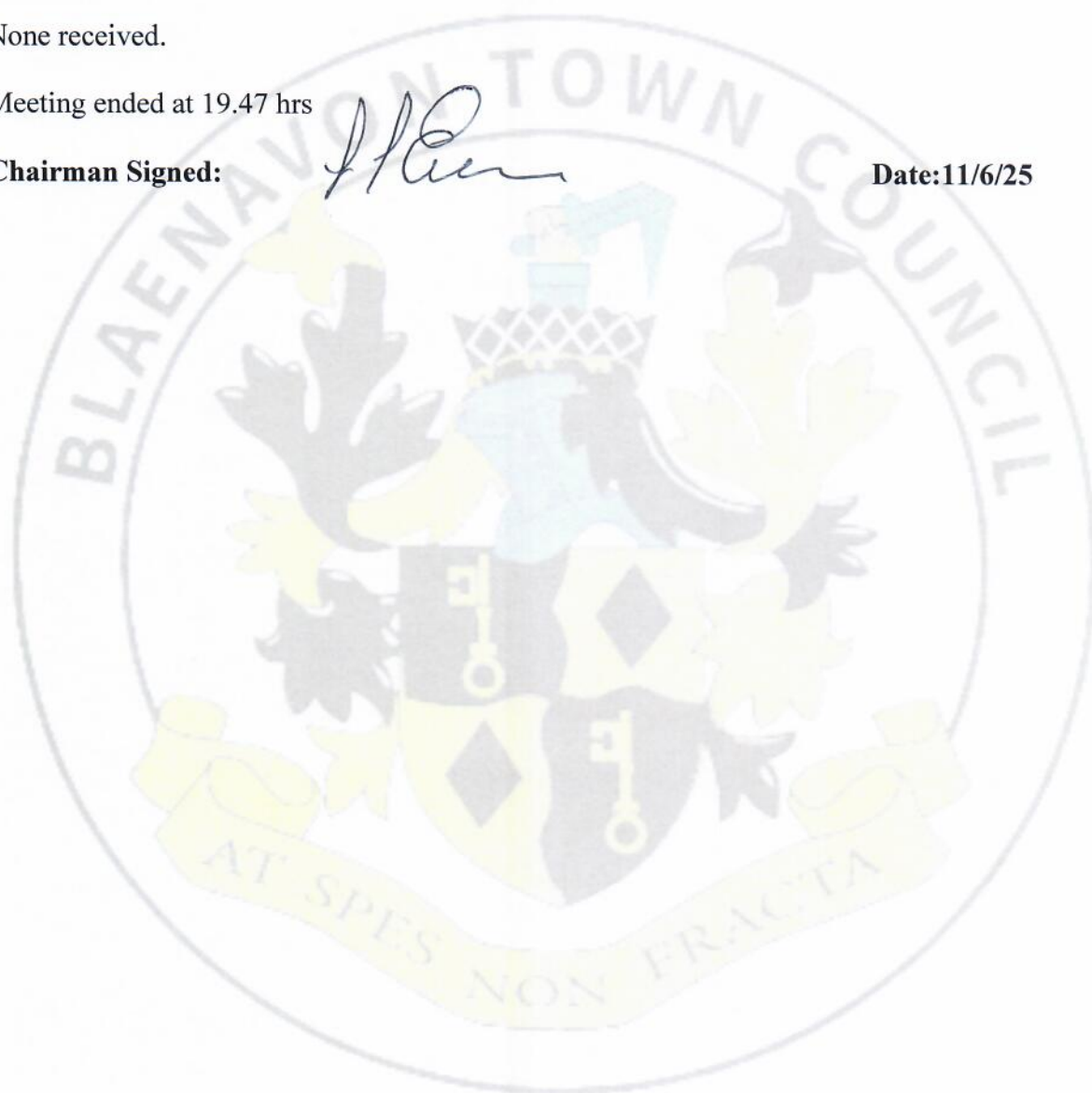
None received.

Meeting ended at 19.47 hrs

Chairman Signed:



Date:11/6/25



Financial Summary - Cashbook

Summary of receipts and payments between 01/05/25 and 31/05/25 inclusive. This may include transactions with ledger dates outside this period.

Balances at the start of the year

Ordinary Accounts

Current Account	£82,365.83
Petty Cash	£4.73
Total	<u>£82,370.56</u>

Balances at start of period

Ordinary Accounts

Current Account	£127,323.06
Petty Cash	£4.73
Total	<u>£127,327.79</u>

RECEIPTS	Net	Vat	Gross
Council	£537.00	£0.00	£537.00
Total Receipts	<u>£537.00</u>	<u>£0.00</u>	<u>£537.00</u>
PAYMENTS	Net	Vat	Gross
Council	£15,736.03	£393.49	£16,129.52
Total Payments	<u>£15,736.03</u>	<u>£393.49</u>	<u>£16,129.52</u>

Closing Balances

Ordinary Accounts

Current Account	£111,730.54
Petty Cash	£4.73
Total	<u>£111,735.27</u>

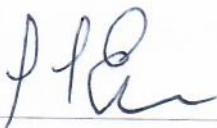
Uncleared and Unpresented effects

Statement Closing Balances

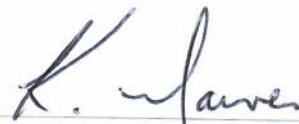
Ordinary Accounts

Current Account	£111,730.54
Petty Cash	£4.73
Total	<u>£111,735.27</u>

Signed



Chair



Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer